

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A computer-implemented method for managing avail
inventory data of media programming streams for a communications
5 network, the method comprising the steps of:

correlating available addressable units of the
communications network with the avail inventory data; and

generating a proposed price for purchase of at least one
avail based on results of the correlating step.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

storing addressable unit data pertaining to addressable
units of the communications network, said data comprising
information concerning characteristics of individuals associated
5 with the addressable units;

receiving segment characteristics of a market segment from
a user;

correlating the received segment characteristics with the
stored addressable unit data; and

20 automatically identifying the available addressable units
to be correlated with the avail inventory as a result of
performing the step for correlating the segment characteristics.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of correlating the received segment characteristics includes:

storing geo-demographic data corresponding to geo-demographic characteristics of neighborhoods;

comparing the received segment characteristics with the stored geo-demographic data;

obtaining a list of indicators based on results of the comparing step, the indicators indicating geographic areas corresponding to the received segment characteristics; and

correlating the list of indicators with the addressable unit data to identify the available addressable units.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein, in the obtaining step, the indicators are zip code + 4 identifiers.

5. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

displaying a geographical map of the identified available addressable units.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the correlating step includes:

storing content viewership data identifying materials or types of materials that viewers associated with the addressable
5 units of the communications network are likely to view;

correlating the available addressable units with the stored content viewership data;

generating, based on results of this correlating step, a list of materials that viewers associated with the available
0 addressable units are likely to view; and

identifying the at least one avail associated with the obtained list of materials.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

15 displaying the identified at least one avail to a user.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating step includes:

selecting, by a user, price-setting parameters associated
20 with the at least one avail; and

performing an avail pricing analysis based on the selected price-setting parameters to generate the proposed price.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein, in the selecting step,
5 the price-setting parameters include at least one of the following: a size of addressable units and a number of avails.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the selecting step includes:

10 selecting, by the user, a subset of the available addressable units; and

15 selecting, by the user, a subset of the available avails, whereby the price-setting parameters are selected.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the subset of the available addressable units is selected based on a geographical location of each of the available addressable units.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the performing step
20 includes:

evaluating price determining factors including the user-selected price-setting parameters; and

calculating the proposed price based on results of the evaluating step using avail pricing data.

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13. The method of claim 12, wherein, in the evaluating step, the price determining factors further include at least one of the following: correlation indexes indicating the strengths of correlations, frequency of purchase by the user, promotional discounts, and scheduled presentation time for the available avails selected by the user.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

displaying the generated proposed price on a display device.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the display of the generated proposed price is overlaid on a display of the available addressable units.

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16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving payment information from a user for purchasing
the at least one avail according to the proposed price;
processing the received payment information; and
informing a result of the processing step to the user.

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17. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications
network is a television service network.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the correlating step
includes:

storing program viewership data pertaining to programs or
types of programs that viewers associated with the addressable
units of the communications network are likely to view;

correlating the available addressable units with the stored
program viewership data;

generating, based on results of this correlating step, a
list of programs that viewers associated with the available
addressable units are likely to view; and

identifying the at least one avail associated with the
obtained list of programs.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the addressable units of the communications network are set top boxes assigned to subscribers of the communications network.

5 20. The method of claim 1, wherein the addressable units of the communications network are nodes on the communications network.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications
0 network is an Internet service network.

22. A computer program product embodied on computer
readable media readable by a computing system, for managing
avail inventory data of media programming streams for a
5 communications network, the computer program product comprising:

first computer-readable program code means for correlating
available addressable units of the communications network with
the avail inventory data; and

second computer-readable program code means for generating
20 a proposed price for purchase of at least one avail based on
results of the correlation.

23. The computer program product of claim 22, further comprising:

third computer-readable program code means for receiving segment characteristics of a market segment from a user;

5 fourth computer-readable program code means for correlating the received segment characteristics with addressable unit data, the addressable unit data pertaining to all addressable units of the communications network and stored in the computing system; and

10 fifth computer-readable program code means for identifying the available addressable units to be correlated with the available inventory in response to an output from the fourth computer-readable code means.

15 24. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the fourth computer-readable program code means correlates the received segment characteristics with the addressable unit data by comparing the received segment characteristics with stored geo-demographic data, obtaining a list of indicators based on
20 results of this comparison, and associating the list of indicators with the addressable unit data, wherein the indicators indicate geographic areas corresponding to the segment characteristics.

25. The computer program product of claim 24, wherein the indicators are zip code + 4 identifiers.

5 26. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising:

sixth computer-readable program code means for displaying a geographical map of the identified available addressable units.

27. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the first computer-readable program code means correlates the available addressable units with the avail inventory data by correlating the available addressable units with stored content viewership data, and generating a list of materials that viewers associated with the available addressable units are likely to view based on results of this correlation.

28. The computer program product of claim 27, further comprising:

20 seventh computer readable program code means for identifying the at least one avail by searching for avails

associated with the obtained list of materials, which are available for sale.

29. The computer program product of claim 28, further
5 comprising:

 eighth computer-readable program code means for displaying
the identified at least one avail to a user.

30. The computer program product of claim 31, wherein the
10 second computer-readable program code means receives from a user
price-setting parameters associated with the at least one avail,
and performs an avail pricing analysis based on the received
price-setting parameters to generate the proposed price.

31. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the
15 price-setting parameters include at least one of the following:
a size of addressable units, and a number of avails.

32. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein, in
20 the avail pricing analysis, the second computer-readable program
code means evaluates price determining factors including the
price-setting parameters, and calculates the proposed price

based on the price determining factors using stored avail
pricing data.

33. The computer program product of claim 32, wherein the
5 price determining factors further include at least one of the
following: correlation indexes indicating the strengths of
correlations, frequency of purchase by the user, promotional
discounts, and scheduled presentation time for the available
avails selected by the user.

34. The computer program product of claim 22, further
comprising:

ninth computer-readable program code means for displaying
the generated proposed price on a display device.

35. The computer program product of claim 34, further
comprising:

tenth computer-readable program code means for overlaying
the display of the proposed price on a display of the available
20 addressable units.

36. The computer program product of claim 22 further comprising:

eleventh computer-readable program code means for receiving payment information from a user for purchasing the at least one
5 avail according to the proposed price, processing the received payment information and informing the user of a result of processing the payment information.

37. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the
10 communications network is a television service network.

38. The computer program product of claim 27, wherein the
first computer-readable program code means correlates the
available address of the units with the avail inventory data by
15 correlating the available addressable units with stored content viewership data, and generating a list of materials that viewers associated with the available addressable units are likely to view based on results of this correlation.

20 39. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the communications network is an Internet service network.

40. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the addressable units of the communications network are set top boxes assigned to subscribers of the communications network.

5 41. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the addressable units of the communications network are nodes on the communications network.

42. A management system for managing avail inventory data of media programming streams for a communications network, the system comprising:

a first storage unit for storing the avail inventory data;
and

a computer-implemented module, coupled to the first storage unit, for correlating available addressable units of the communications network with the avail inventory data stored in the first storage unit, and generating a proposed price for purchase of at least one avail based on results of the correlation.

43. The system of claim 42, further comprising:

a user interface device, coupled to the computer-implemented module, for receiving segment characteristics of a market segment selected by a user and directing the received segment characteristics to the computer-implemented module.

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44. The system of claim 43, wherein the user-interface device further includes a display device for displaying a geographical map of the available addressable units.

45. The system of claim 43, wherein the user interface device includes a computer having an input unit for directly receiving inputs from the user.

46. The system of claim 42, further comprising:

a second storage unit, coupled to the computer-implemented module, for storing addressable unit data pertaining to all addressable units of the communications network.

47. The system of claim 46, further comprising:

a third storage unit, coupled to the computer-implemented module, for storing geo-demographic data identifying geographical areas and demographic characteristics of the geographical areas.

48. The system of claim 47, wherein the computer-
implemented module compares the received segment characteristics
with the geo-demographic data stored in the third storage unit,
5 obtains a list of indicators based on results of this
comparison, the indicators indicating geographical areas
corresponding to the received segment characteristics, and
correlates the list of indicators with the addressable unit data
stored in the second storage unit to identify the available
10 addressable units.

49. The system of claim 48, wherein the indicators are zip
code + 4 identifiers.

50. The system of claim 42, further comprising:
15 a fourth storage unit, coupled to the computer-implemented
module, for storing content viewership data identifying
materials or types of materials that viewers associated with the
addressable units of the communications network are likely to
view.

20 51. The system of claim 50, wherein the computer-
implemented module correlates the available addressable units

with the content viewership data stored in the fourth storage unit, obtains a list of materials that viewers associated with the available addressable units are likely to view based on results of this correlation, and identifies the at least one
5 avail associated with the obtained list of materials that are available for sale.

52. The system of claim 42, further comprising:

10 a display device, coupled to the computer-implemented module, for displaying the at least one avail to a user.

15 53. The system of claim 52, wherein the display device displays the at least one avail with an overlay of a display of the available addressable units.

20 54. The system of claim 42, wherein the computer-implemented module receives price-setting parameters associated with the at least one avail from a user, and performs an avail pricing analysis based on the received price-setting parameters to generate the proposed price.

55. The system of claim 54, wherein the price-setting parameters include a size of desired addressable units, and a number of desired avails.

5 56. The system of claim 54, further comprising:

a fifth storage unit, coupled to the computer-implemented module, for storing avail pricing data directed to pricing data for avails.

10 57. The system of claim 56, wherein, in the avail pricing analysis, the computer-implemented module considers price determining factors including the price-setting parameters, and calculates the proposed price based on results of this consideration using the avail pricing data stored in the fifth storage unit.

15 58. The system of claim 57, wherein the price determining factors further include at least one of the following:
correlation indexes indicating the strengths of correlations,
frequency of purchase by the user, application of promotional
20 discounts, and scheduled presentation time for the available avails selected by the user.

59. The system of claim 43, wherein the computer-
implemented module communicates with the user interface device
via the Internet.

5 60. The system of claim 42, wherein the communications
network is a television service network.

61. The system of claim 42, wherein the addressable units
are set top boxes assigned to subscribers of the communications
network.

62. The system of claim 42, wherein the addressable units
are nodes on the communications network.

63. The system of claim 42, wherein the communications
network is an Internet service network.